

Michael Barn ,  
South side of River Rd. (LR45012),  
approximately 4 miles northeast  
of Shawnee on Delaware  
Shawnee on Delaware vicinity,  
Middle Smithfield Township  
Monroe County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1259

PA,  
45-SHAWD.V,  
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1259

THE MICHAEL BARN

Location:

Located on the south side of River Rd. (LR 45012), .8 miles northeast of township line, approximately 4 miles northeast of Shawnee on Delaware, in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Shawnee on Delaware vicinity, Middle Smithfield Township, Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Bushkill Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.496870.4542780.

Present Owner:

United States Government.

Present Use:

Destroyed by fire in 1971.

Significance:

Typical of the early barns in the Delaware River Valley, this bank barn, built and long owned by the Michael Family, displays a mortise, tenon and pegged frame of hand-hewn members, and examples of the original hardware.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Early nineteenth century. According to Victor H. Dimmick (b. 1882), the barn was considered "very old," when he was a child. It could be the work of John Michael (1767-1839), son of John George Michael, or it could be attributed to either of his sons, John, Jr. or George M. Michael (1800-1893).
2. Original and subsequent owners: This is an incomplete chain of title. Reference is to the Records Rooms of the County Clerk and Registrar, Monroe County, Pennsylvania, unless otherwise noted.

1794 Deed: 23 April 1794 Recorded 12 Aug. 1794  
Book B, vol. 2, page 155  
Isaac Humphreys and Elizabeth, ux.,  
to  
George Michael [John George Michael], of Forks Township,  
Northampton County, Pennsylvania.  
Consideration: 2,800 pounds, (Pennsylvania),  
Acreage: 2 tracts (1) 284 acres (2) 178 acres,  
115 perches,

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- 1805 Will: 3 November 1800 Probated 10 Sept. 1805  
Book 1, page 6 Wayne County  
George Michael [John George Michael], of Middle Smithfield  
Township, Wayne County, "Yeoman".  
Bequests: to widow Margaret, several tracts of land  
purchased from Isaac Humphrey, containing 9 or 10  
hundred acres, "whereon is erected a good mansion  
house and other buildings"; to be divided among  
sons later.
- 1839 Will: 19 November 1839  
Book 1, page 23  
File #14  
John Michael, Sr., "Yeoman"  
Bequests: to sons George M. and John, Jr.,  
real estate.
- 1847 Deed: 6 December 1847 Recorded 17 May 1848  
Book 4, page 166  
John Michael, Jr., of Middle Smithfield Township, "Farmer"  
and Susan, ux.,  
to  
George M. Michael, "Farmer"  
Consideration: \$6,000.  
Acreage: 107 acres.  
Grant: part of larger tract that became vested in  
John Michael, Sr., who bequeathed the larger  
tracts to sons John, Jr., and George M. Michael.
- 1847 Deed: 6 December 1847 Recorded 17 May 1848  
Book 4, page 167  
John Michael, Jr., et ux.,  
to  
George M. Michael  
Acreage: 53 acres.  
Grant: part of two larger tracts received by the  
brothers from John Michael, Sr.
- 1893 Will: 10 January 1890 Probated (d. July 1893)  
Book 4, page 155  
George M. Michael  
Bequests: Executor to sell all real estate, and  
divide proceeds by seven, John Michael, Jr., Ann  
Van Campen, heirs of Mary Stark, heirs of  
Elizabeth Tract, heirs of Sarah Eilenberger,  
Catharine Eilenberger, and Lydia Overfield; Lydia  
Overfield to continue in residence until sale.

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- 1894 Deed: 17 February 1894 Recorded 17 Feb. 1894  
Book 45, page 163  
Aaron Smith, Executor of Estate of George M. Michael,  
to  
John M. Van Auken, of Pahaquarry Township, Warren County,  
New Jersey  
Consideration: \$455.  
Acreage: 106 acres.  
Grant: part of premises which John Michael, Jr.,  
et ux. granted to George M. Michael.
- 1913 Deed: 6 October 1913 Recorded 20 Oct. 1913  
Book 73, page 536  
Peter Bonser, Sheriff of Monroe County,  
to  
John M. Michael, and Edith M. Michael, ux., of Pahaquarry  
Township  
Consideration: \$4565.  
Acreage: 106 acres.  
Grant: Being part of premises which Aaron Smith  
Executor, granted to John M. Van Auken at ux.  
sold at Sheriff's Sale under a writ of Fieri  
Facias, issued 12 Sept., 1913, Court of Common  
Pleas, at the suit of Hannah M. Van Auken against  
John M. Van Auken.

3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The construction of the barn was undoubtedly the work of the Michaels themselves. Both available Inventories which pertain to this farm, that of John Michael (1767-1839), and George M. Michael (c.1800-1893), include lumber, building supplies, and tools.
4. Alterations and additions: Alterations to the barn have taken place over a long period of time.

John M. Michael is known to have modernized the house, and authorized alterations in the barn.

Victor H. Dimmick, carpenter, is responsible for the concrete flooring on the ground level, and the gutters and stanchions for the accommodation of dairy cattle in the barn.

Joseph Keminour, c.1915-1920, assisted in the remodeling of the barn. He replaced the wide, vertical boards that had covered all the walls with the present, thinner, horizontal siding. He also assisted in laying a new wood floor on one side of the barn, and patching the floor at the other end.

At some point, John M. Michael rented the farm to Robert Nyhart who removed the older hinged doors, and substituted them with the present sliding doors. Nyhart also constructed the modern, cinder-block wall which encloses the former open space on the rear side of the bank barn.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

John George Michael, emigrant from Germany, moved to Middle Smithfield Township circa 1795 from Forks Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, and purchased three farms which descended to his three sons, Peter, George, and John. The original house is said to have adjoined the house adjacent to the Michael Barn. (History of Wayne, Pike and Monroe Counties, Interview with Mrs. Dimmick).

According to Joseph Keminour, who as a young man came to live at the farm a few years after John M. Michael purchased it (1913), the then elderly generation in the area reported that the barn had been used as a church until Zion Lutheran Church was completed in 1851, on the hill above the barn.

The barn and surrounding land remained in the family until 1894 and the death of George M. Michael.

C. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Dimmick, Victor H. Interview by Elizabeth D. Walters.  
Information obtained 24 June 1971, Stroudsburg,  
Pennsylvania.

Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of George M. Michael,  
15 August 1893. Registrar's Room, Monroe County  
Courthouse, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. [Inventory Book  
3, page 627]

Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of John Michael, Sr.,  
8 June 1840. Registrar's Room, Monroe County Courthouse,  
Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. [File No. 14]

Keminour, Joseph. Interview, 3 August 1971, Hidden Laken near  
Shawnee, Pennsylvania.

Tax Records, Monroe County Courthouse (Attic), Stroudsburg, Pa.

Walters, Elizabeth, Dimmick (Mrs. Horace.) Interview,  
24 June 1971, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

B. Secondary and published Sources:

Mathews, Alfred. History of Wayne, Pike and Monroe Counties,  
Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: R. T. Peck & Company, 1886.

Prepared by Lynn Beebe Weaver  
Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
August, 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Michael Barn is typical of the early barns in the Delaware River Valley. Although covered with siding of a comparatively recent date, the bank barn displays constructional techniques used in the 18th and 19th centuries. The pegged frame is composed of hand-hewn members, mortised and tenoned; a few examples of the original hardware remain.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair; structural members good, exterior siding good, flooring and lower-level stalls generally poor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The barn measures 60'-6" x 40'-7" in plan and 28'-9" in height from the ground floor to the ridge. A small shed measuring 9'-6" x 10'-10" is located on the ground floor, southeast corner.
2. Foundations: Random rubble stone.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Ground floor, rubble stonework, partly below grade on sloping site. On the east wall there has been some modern concrete blocks installed to replace stone and at the rear an exterior modern concrete block wall partition has been built, enclosing the conventional barn overhang of the period. Upper levels are wood frame with clapboard siding, painted white. This is recent siding replacing the old vertical wood siding. There are still some pieces in evidence where the new clapboard was placed directly over the old. It varies in width 10" to 16".

4. Structural system, framing: Basement floor - stone bearing walls; upper levels - combination platform framing and post and lintel system, with angular cross braces at the four interior bay columns. The connections are mortised and tenoned, pegged. The very large size of some of the basement beams would seem to date the building early nineteenth century.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to the barn is located at the road level on the north elevation. The large, centered double doors are composed of vertical boards hung on rollers. At the same point on the opposite wall there is a smaller roll-type wooden door used to gain access from the ground to the hay lofts. There are several openings on the ground (south side) for access to the stables at that level.
- b. Windows and shutters: There are several small fixed windows around the barn at the lower level and two six-over-six sashes on the upper level, each side. There is also a wood slat vent on each side near the peak of the gable.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with slates. The ridge runs parallel to the front elevation.
- b. Cornice, eave: Simple open eaves extend 1'-0" beyond the wall.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Ground floor: The ground floor is very open with no interior walls. The remains of wooden and metal animal stalls are all that exist and these are in very poor condition. The upper floor overhangs the ground floor 6'-4" and a new modern concrete block wall has been constructed to enclose this space. On the north side is a small concrete block attachment, containing the milk storage room.
- b. Main floor: The first floor (road level) is divided into three fairly equal bays, the center one being 40'-18" and the side bays 40' x 21'.

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The north bay is further subdivided by an enclosed harness room and the south bay has enclosed grain bins. The central bay is open but partially covered with the lofts above.

2. Stairways: There is one wooden stairway from the ground floor to the first floor, containing ten risers and no landing. There are wooden ladders incorporated into the structure of the interior bays.
3. Flooring: The bottom floor is concrete and dirt. The first floor is all wood construction but varies in condition and age. The center bay is wide board and pegged. It appears to be original. The south bay is in very poor condition and appears to be floored with the exterior siding from when it was replaced. The north bay as well as a small section of the south bay is modern flooring.
4. Wall finish: The only interior walls are wood planking in the harness room and grain bin. Ceilings are all exposed wood frame construction.
5. Doorways and doors: There is one interior wood plank door at the head of the stairs; appears to be original with original hardware.
6. Decorative features and trim: The most notable features of the barn are the interlocking pegged wood frame connections, particularly those at the junction of the interior bay columns and the roof rafters.
7. Hardware: There are long metal strap hinges on the door at the head of the stairs (heart shaped ends) and also on the ground floor at exterior door locations on the east side.

D. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

1. General Setting: The barn is set on a moderate slope with the ground leveling out toward Delaware River approximately 1/4 mile away.
2. Outbuildings: This barn is an outbuilding for the George Michael house located southwest of the barn. Behind the barn to the south is a large chicken coop, approximately the length of the barn. Located near the house is a modern garage. There is also a garage across River Road from the barn which appears to be part of the complex.



PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1971 under the direction of John M. MacRae (University of Florida), Project Supervisor, by Jack L. Finglass (Carnegie-Mellon University), Martin J. Rosenblum (University of Illinois), architects, and Stephen J. Kirk (University of Kansas), student assistant architect, in the HABS field office at Columbia, New Jersey in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by Lynn Beebe Weaver, project historian in 1971. This written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by George Eisenman in 1971.